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ABSTRACT

A study examined psychological and contextual influences on the courses of Australian women's lives and careers. Data were obtained from two sources: (1) the Career Development Project (CDP), a longitudinal study of 3,000 Australian men and women who were selected from an initial sample of 17-year-olds in 1973 and whose educational and career paths were followed through 1982, and (2) an in-depth qualitative study of 30 sample members. The study focused on the following: changing perspectives on work and careers; career orientation and success; career plans, motivations, and achievement; attainment of professional careers; gender-related subjective and objective perceptions of job satisfaction; ambivalence, conflict, and orientations in women's lives; factors determining women's career orientation; career dilemmas related to conflicts between home and work; and lifestyle satisfaction. Explanations of career development were discovered to be complex, diverse, and linked to "self factors" (abilities and motivations) and structural factors (women's concentration in secondary labor markets, gender-based job segregation, household divisions of labor, and class and patriarchal social patterns). Men and women appeared to adopt roles and responsibilities that society deemed appropriate at their point in time. Attitudes toward women's work and family roles appeared more variable and susceptible to debate than men's. It was concluded that public policy should take account of personal and social as well as economic factors affecting individuals. (The book contains 337 references and 44 figures/tables. Appended are the following: occupational classification based on the CDP data, details of results for four assessed models, and intercorrelations between model variables for various study subpopulations.) (MN)